

## REVIVE CHURCH- HIS WORKMANSHIP

### EPHESIANS SERIES #8

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Recall that I mentioned that there are seven different pictures of the church in Ephesians. Every picture given is one of unity. *We have covered the **ecclesia**, the called-out ones who are purposed to represent the governmental authority of God which exercises spiritual judgment and authority on the earth.* **The second picture given was the **body** of Jesus Christ** which is how Jesus relates to the world through us. We flow together in unity, joined together through covenant.

Today we are going to cover the **third picture which comes to us from Ephesians 2:10, which is we are God's workmanship.**

Ephesians 2:8-10- 8For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

**The English translation of Ephesians 2:10 doesn't bring out the real significance of this picture.** The Greek word translated **workmanship** is *poiema*. The Latin version is *poema*, from which we get the English word **poem**. The NIV uses the word **handiwork**, the NLT uses the word **masterpiece** and the Jerusalem Bible uses the word **work of art**. **The word workmanship is taken from the field of art and creativity. We are God's poem, His masterpiece of art!** Jesus is an Artist!" And you are His crowning achievement, His masterpiece! **You're an expression of the very inner being of the Artist, the divine Artist, God Himself.**

**When we think about all that God has created,** of all the majestic mountains and oceans which reveal God to us (all creation speaks of Him) **we have to realize that God considers us His greatest work of art, so much so that only humans are those who are made in His image.** **Genesis 1:27 (NKJV) So God created man in His [own] image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.**

**Picture a lump of clay that is not formed or a block of marble that has not yet been sculpted.** To the average eye there is nothing that special about a block of marble, yet the artist who has the vision of the perfect masterpiece knows everything that has to be chipped away at the stone in order for the perfect form to emerge. **Most would not call it a masterpiece until it has been perfected but God is not like man.** **Even before we see the result in the natural, God calls us His masterpiece.** *He alone sees perfectly what needs to be shaped or removed.* **The more you and I allow God to cut away, the better the clarity of His predetermined work of art is revealed. We are His masterpiece, His work.**

**Michelangelo said about his statues.** *"Every stroke of the chisel reveals a little bit more of the plan".* We will get into this a little deeper when we study Chapter 3 of Ephesians but listen to this. **Ephesians 3:10-** to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known **by the church** to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,

**I want to remind you that yes individually you are God's masterpiece, however this goes way beyond you and includes the entirety of God's people.** **Together we are the masterpiece of God.** He chose us, His redeemed people, **the church** to demonstrate His manifold wisdom to the entire universe, to the world and the unseen heavenly realms. **The word manifold is a word that means great variety or many sided.** Each

one of us demonstrates a unique refraction of the overall multi-faceted wisdom of God. **Together we blend into a beautiful mosaic.**

**As His workmanship we are created in Jesus Christ for good works. These good works have been prepared in advance by our Father.**

1. We are not merely ornamental or something beautiful to admire we, **the church is meant to be useful.**
2. We are to fulfill a function. Each of us are **purposed by God to find out our function** within the body of Christ and do it whole heartedly.
3. God did not give us the Holy Spirit, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead so that we could get together and look good.

Eph. 2:10 *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

*This is so good. God has already prepared the works He has planned for us before-hand.* When I started believing this truth it helped me stop striving and believe. **None of us are meant to write our own script for this life. Your script has been written by a loving, merciful Father who designed you and is for you. He has sovereignly gone before His church and has prepared all of our days.** The church will not be a work of man but the workmanship of God Himself, beautified by the Holy Spirit.

*Psalm 139:13-16* *For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.*

**If you would have told me I would be a Pastor and find my calling doing it I would have never believed you.** I tried being a mortician, managing gas stations and banking yet I knew in my heart God had designed me to do something different, I wasn't where I was supposed to be for the long haul. *When God called me into ministry and I began to realize the way He designed me to do this, I settled into the fact that this is what He created me to do, this is what He had written in His book for me even when I was still unformed!*

**The fact that we are God's masterpiece is a beautiful truth meant to be discovered. Ultimately, we can rest in the Designer's hands and trust Him alone with the results. The essential feature of the picture of the masterpiece is the demonstration of God's creative genius. God has been the creator since the beginning, and He is still creating today. He created all things yet we are the ones He calls a masterpiece-the church will be the ultimate revelation of God's creative genius.**

**What is required of us as members of His workmanship? Our individual and collective yieldedness. Death to self will and motivations.** As stated in Isaiah. **Isaiah 64:8** *s But now, O Lord, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand.*

**We yield to His leadership and invite Him to mold us!** **Back to the analogy of a block of marble, we let Him chip away at us, or the analogy of a tree, we let Him prune us.** We don't argue with Him or try to resist His

will. As we learn to rest and surrender ourselves fully into His hands He will be faithful to shape us into His marvelous work. So often we fight the process or start questioning God when we haven't arrived at what we believe to be our destination. We need to trust God's timing and that He alone has the wisdom to lead my life.

**Each one of us individually must realize that we have a responsibility to be interconnected/interdependent upon other believers.** What we are individually is not the most important thing, it is what we become together that is the final goal. In order for that to happen we must demonstrate a willingness to lose our individualism to attain a greater whole. **It is not as if God erases our individuality and how He made you to be.** He doesn't delete you, together God emphasizes Christ through our oneness which means we need to die to our over-emphasis of individual expression and emphasize Christ unified expression.

**This is where it can be painful but it hurts so good. When our Father wants to shape us, change us and mold us, He uses pressure.** Most of the time when we are experiencing pressure we say "God I cannot take it any longer". **Yet He says, I'm doing it to make you not the way you want to be, but the way I want you to be.** All of us who love the Lord will experience the pressure of His hands in the days ahead. The pressure may grow more intense, but as long as we stay in His presence and remain pliable we will emerge as the vessel He wants us to be. Only God sees what we are fully capable of. We have capacities in the Holy Spirit that will only come alive in us as we are tested.

The following description is from a secular business but speaks the point I'm trying to get at concerning what we are capable of in the Holy Spirit.

**Capacity Analysis or Performance test** is a method used by organizations to determine their maximum output level or how much they can produce or deliver with the available resources, including manpower, machinery, and materials.

Capacity Analysis is an essential element of operational planning and management. Understanding the maximum level of output an organization can produce helps align production capabilities with demand forecasts.

**The church has to start gauging herself based upon what has been written in the Scriptures and not settle into a framework that is less than our capacity in the Holy Spirit. We have not yet experienced what the Church that is filled with the Holy Spirit can do, but I believe firmly that we will in the years to come.** We have a capacity in the Holy Spirit that the church has never seen. The early church did not know fully what they were capable of until the religious and political pressure of their day began to really impact them and move them from one major location in Jerusalem to fulfill their part of the great commission. When pressure comes you find out what's in you and Holy Spirit reveals what is yet needed to transform us into the image of Jesus Christ.

It is essential that each individual who is part of the whole accepts the fact that they are like no one else within the body of Christ. God designed you in a very specific way that will bring Him glory as you operate in the purpose and function for which you were created. We do not have the choice to change our design. Many people have never accepted themselves as God's masterpiece or workmanship. Jesus cannot fully use you until you accept yourself as God has made you and you will not be able to love others to the capacity God has intended for you until this revelation is personally owned.

**We can all have faith that the best is yet to come, that the Author and perfecter of our faith will complete the work that He started.** Age and personality, type of giftedness does not hinder any believer. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in every single believer, so as we yield to His hands, we trust that He will keep on molding us into His likeness.

Make the good confession-

1. I am God's masterpiece.
2. I am created in Christ Jesus for good works which God Himself has already prepared.
3. All of my days were written in your book while I was still unformed.
4. I will walk out these works by faith.
5. Everything you have purposed for my life will come to fruition as I yield to the leadership of Jesus and trust in the power of the Holy Spirit daily.

Home group questions

1. Discuss-Jesus is an Artist!" And you are His crowning achievement, His masterpiece! You're an expression of the very inner being of the Artist, the divine Artist, God Himself. **Do you believe this? How has this changed how you live?**
2. **Michelangelo said about his statues.** "*Every stroke of the chisel reveals a little bit more of the plan*". Discuss this process in your own life. beauty and difficulty of being chiseled.
3. Discuss this Biblical truth. Before you were born, God had a plan for all of your days. God has prepared beforehand the good works you were purposed to walk in. Go deep with this and what this means for each day of our life.
4. When we are called God's masterpiece we must understand the personal application, however, God is speaking about the church as a unified expression. What we are individually is not the most important thing, it is hat we become together that is the final goal.
5. Discuss the principal of a performance test for the church. Where have we lowered our Biblical expectations.